

I oppose media concentration!

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, the Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. In promoting its supposed goals of fair competition, diversity and local voice in today's media market, I strongly believe that the FCC should retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of the huge, dominant companies and players in the broadcast industry. In fact, for those of us who are paying attention, the changes made in the law in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 are ruining radio and the ability of new artists and small labels to get on the air. Only major labels who can afford to "play ball" with the monopolistic practices of ClearChannel can compete for airtime now.

I urge the FCC to preserve the public interest by keeping the media ownership rules in question intact or, better yet, to roll back the changes enacted in 1996 and to end the monopolization of radio programming, concert promotion and venue ownership by commencing an investigation into the practices of ClearChannel Entertainment.

Also, I support the FCC's plan to hold a public hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA in February of 2003. I strongly encourage the Commission to hold similar hearings in all parts of the country and solicit the widest possible participation from the public. The rarified, lawyerly atmosphere of an FCC rulemaking is not an appropriate decision-making venue when questions as profound as the freedom of our media are at stake. I encourage the Commissioners to come out and meet some of the people who do not have a financial interest in this issue, but a social interest.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is important that the Commission take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process.

Thank you,

J. Reid Hunter